United Nations S/2015/624*

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 August 2015

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2213 (2015) of 27 March 2015. It covers major political and security developments in Libya, provides an overview of the human rights and humanitarian situations in the country, and outlines the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) since my report of 26 February 2015 (S/2015/144).

II. Political and security-related developments

2. Against the backdrop of continued political polarization, institutional crisis and armed conflict, much of the focus of United Nations, regional and international engagement remained on encouraging the main political stakeholders to make progress in talks aimed at reaching an overall political settlement and pave the way for the formation of a single unified national government. While evolving security and community dynamics on the ground in Libya resulted in a number of local reconciliation and ceasefire initiatives, instability and conflict continued to affect many parts of the country, also due to the growing activity and territorial gains of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Daesh-affiliated groups.

3. On 11 July, an important breakthrough was achieved when most of the participants in the United Nations-facilitated Libyan political dialogue initialled the Libyan Political Agreement, which provided a framework for future negotiations on the formation of a Government of National Accord, and helped inject a sense of optimism and unity among Libyan stakeholders. The success of the agreement rests on political inclusiveness. It will therefore be important for the parties that have not initialled the agreement to continue to engage with the dialogue process.

Political dialogue process

4. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Representative and Head of UNSMIL, Bernardino León, remained actively engaged in efforts to push forward the Libyan political dialogue process, aimed at resolving the institutional crisis resulting from the contending claims of legislative and executive legitimacy, and bringing an end to the armed conflict. While a full agreement was not reached in the

* Reissued for technical reasons on 19 August 2015.

15-13079* (E) 190815

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reporting period, progress was made on a number of fronts, including on local, temporary security arrangements, the broad framework of a political settlement, and dialogue regarding the return of internally displaced persons.

5. Building on a series of initial meetings convened in Geneva in January 2015, UNSMIL continued to work closely with all the main parties in Libya to facilitate and develop a comprehensive political dialogue process that ensured the participation of all relevant stakeholders. In addition to the main political talks involving representatives of key political stakeholders, negotiations were also conducted along several tracks involving municipalities, political party leaders and activists, as well as armed groups. UNSMIL also facilitated separate discussions with women's groups and civil society representatives that have been integrated into the other dialogue tracks.

6. Participants in the main political track gathered in Skhirat, Morocco, on 5 March and then again on 12 March for further discussions pertaining to the formation of a Government of National Accord and security arrangements that would form the basis for a nationwide ceasefire and the phased withdrawal of armed groups and militias from towns and cities across Libya. Other key elements for discussion included guiding principles for the management of the remainder of the transitional period and confidence-building measures, mainly focused on alleviating the humanitarian situation and addressing urgent human rights concerns.

7. During a round of talks beginning 19 March, participants agreed to focus discussions on reaching an overall framework solution to the political crisis and armed conflict in Libya. Initial feedback from the parties on the framework provided the basis for subsequent negotiations, primarily focused on the creation of political institutions that would manage the remainder of the transitional period, defining their competences and agreeing on a road map for the constitution drafting process.

8. Between late March and late June, my Special Representative convened the dialogue participants for several rounds of talks in Skhirat to try to forge consensus on the main text of a political agreement. Throughout that period, the dialogue teams from the two main camps regularly travelled back to Libya to consult with their respective constituencies, primarily the House of Representatives and the General National Congress. During the course of the political dialogue, UNSMIL launched a public awareness campaign aimed at encouraging widespread support for the agreement.

9. In an important breakthrough, most of the dialogue participants initialled the Libyan Political Agreement at a ceremony in Skhirat on 11 July. Despite calls by other dialogue participants urging the General National Congress to take part in the initialling ceremony, its representatives were not in attendance. My Special Representative has nonetheless given public assurances that the United Nations remained committed to engaging with all the relevant parties, noting their concerns in order to ensure an inclusive, credible and successful Libyan dialogue process.

10. In parallel to the main political tracks, UNSMIL also convened in Algiers three separate rounds of talks between March and June with Libyan political party representatives and political activists. The talks included discussions on ways of advancing the overall dialogue process and on key issues for the democratic transition, including combatting terrorism and responding to the humanitarian needs

of the population. After each round of talks, participants sent clear messages of support for the main political track and urged a peaceful resolution to the political and institutional crisis in the country.

11. Separately, UNSMIL convened meetings of representatives of 28 municipal and local councils from across Libya. These included a meeting in Brussels on 23 March and another in Tunis on 29 May. Participants exchanged views and discussed cooperation with UNSMIL and the United Nations country team on issues related to humanitarian-assistance support, prisoners, missing persons and the internally displaced.

12. It was within this framework that delegations from Misrata and Tawergha met in Tunis on 27 and 28 May, with UNSMIL facilitation, to begin discussions on the return of the Tawerghans to their city. In a public statement at the end of the meeting, both sides agreed to set up a joint committee to resolve issues relating to the right of return to Tawergha in a safe and dignified manner, including accountability and reparations for victims on both sides. UNSMIL is providing further assistance in this endeavour.

13. In an effort to push forward discussions on security arrangements, UNSMIL arranged a series of preparatory meetings in Libya. Participants included a number of Libyan security actors, with discussions focusing on issues related to a ceasefire, arms and ammunition management and monitoring, as well as possible United Nations and international community support for the implementation of security arrangements.

14. The Mission also undertook and supported activities in parallel to the official dialogue tracks, which also include some influential women delegates. The Mission convened a meeting in Tunis on 21 and 22 April, which brought together some 40 Libyan women from across the country's political spectrum, regions and cultural and ethnic groups.

15. Underscoring the importance of regional and international engagement in the Libyan dialogue process, my Special Representative continued to consult closely with different Member States and with regional and international organizations, including the African Union, the League of Arab States and the European Union. Their combined support for the dialogue process and positive engagement has been critical in facilitating the work of my Special Representative.

16. From 25 to 28 May, the Egyptian Government hosted a meeting of a group of Libyan tribal leaders in Cairo to support the overall dialogue process.

17. On 5 June, at the invitation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad, my Special Representative briefed Libya's neighbouring countries, during which he also had the opportunity to exchange views with high-level representatives of the African Union and the League of Arab States on progress in the dialogue process and common challenges resulting from the conflict in Libya.

18. On 9 June, the Government of Germany hosted a meeting in Berlin where a number of Member States presented a joint demarche to participants in the main political talks, including the House of Representatives and the General National Congress, urging them to swiftly conclude the dialogue and spare their country from the scourge of protracted conflict, chaos and terrorism. Representatives from the

participating Member States committed to support the transitional institutions once an agreement is signed.

19. On 12 June, my Special Representative attended and briefed the fourth meeting of the International Contact Group on Libya, hosted by the African Union during the summit of Heads of State and Government in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Constitution drafting process

20. The Constitution Drafting Assembly continued to pursue its mandate, though security, political, logistical, financial and organizational difficulties presented significant obstacles to progress. The Assembly shifted its focus away from the eight substantive committees that dominated its earlier work, and has devoted much of its attention to debating the preliminary texts released by the committees in December 2014.

21. The Constitution Drafting Assembly voted in late February to conduct a number of workshops outside of Libya with support from the United Nations and other international partners. Logistical and other constraints, however, have largely disrupted these plans, resulting in the Assembly spending most of the reporting period in Al Baida. Security concerns over travel to Al Baida, in turn, have severely limited the international community's access to the Assembly and its capacity to provide significant assistance.

22. UNSMIL continues to serve as the coordinating body and primary liaison for the international community to the Constitution Drafting Assembly. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has provided support for constitution-related advocacy programmes, including for a campaign to include women's concerns in the constitution and a new process focusing on Libyan youth. UNDP has also embedded a media adviser and a liaison officer with the Office of the President of the Constitution Drafting Assembly in Al Baida.

Situation in the west

23. Following the last round of clashes in late March around the town of Aziziya, south of Tripoli, the general security situation in the western region was characterized by a growing rapprochement among different actors, with several local communities initiating ceasefire and reconciliation initiatives, in certain cases with active support from UNSMIL.

24. In the oil crescent region, Misratan forces withdrew from the town of Sidra in late March, effectively bringing an end to Operation Sunrise, launched in December 2014 in an effort to gain control over oil installations in the area. The withdrawal followed an agreement between armed groups and tribal leaders from Misrata and the Magharba tribe, including elements from the Petroleum Facilities Guard under Magharba control. UNSMIL assisted in facilitating the agreement.

25. In mid-March, forces from Warshafana launched a military offensive south of Tripoli to regain areas in the Warshafana tribal belt that had been previously captured by the Libya Dawn coalition. Warshafana forces asserted control over the town of Aziziya, despite resistance from additional forces from Libya Dawn redeployed into the area, mainly from Misrata. The two sides subsequently negotiated a ceasefire, the terms of which included a cessation of hostilities, the

disengagement of forces in the area, the cantonment of medium and heavy weapons, an exchange of prisoners and the return of internally displaced persons.

26. Following the ceasefire agreement between Misrata and Warshafana, a similar initiative of detente was launched between Misrata and Zintan. Both sides undertook steps to reduce tensions and cease hostilities at the main flashpoints in the region. In mid-June, both Misrata and Zintan reached agreement with several coastal towns, including Sabratha, Zuwara, Regdalin and Jmeil, on a trilateral ceasefire arrangement for the Wuttiya airbase, which for much of the past year had been a main point of armed confrontation between the Libya Dawn coalition and Zintan forces.

27. In a parallel move, Zintan negotiated local ceasefire deals with the towns of Gheryan and Al Qala'a. The various local ceasefire initiatives led to a marked reduction of military tensions in western Libya and the greater Tripoli area.

28. In June, a hard-line faction within the Libya Dawn coalition, which had earlier called for the rejection of the United Nations-facilitated political dialogue process, announced the formation of a new military coalition, the "Steadfastness Front". The move reflected increasing fragmentation within the Libya Dawn coalition, as many of its armed group components publicly supported the dialogue.

29. The growing threat posed by ISIL/Daesh-affiliated groups became increasingly evident as the movement consolidated its presence and influence in central Libya during the reporting period. A combination of factors provided it with a conducive environment to expand its influence and assert control over new territory. These include weak border controls and State institutions, local community grievances, the ongoing institutional crisis between east and west and developments in the Sahel region.

30. Fighting between Misratan and ISIL/Daesh forces intensified around Sirte and the town of Nawfiliya in March, with a series of airstrikes against ISIL/Daesh targets in the area. As the fighting escalated, ISIL/Daesh claimed responsibility for several suicide bombings against Misratan forces and their allies in both Sirte and Misrata. In June, Misratan forces withdrew from Sirte, citing a lack of support from other elements of the Libya Dawn coalition and the authorities in Tripoli. ISIL/Daesh subsequently took control of Sirte and much of the 200-kilometre coastal area east of the city. In June, forces from Misrata intensified airstrikes on ISIL/Daesh in Sirte, Nawfiliya and the town of Zella further inland.

Situation in the east

31. In the east, the security situation remained critical throughout the reporting period, with fighting continuing primarily in Benghazi and Derna, mainly between Operation Dignity forces and armed Islamist groups.

32. In Benghazi, the ongoing conflict shifted into an urban war of attrition in which neither side has been able to make additional significant territorial gains. Operation Dignity forces remain in control of large parts of eastern and northern Benghazi, while the Benghazi Revolutionaries' Shura Council, a coalition of local Islamist groups and Ansar al-Sharia, maintain control over neighbourhoods in the west and south of the city. The Council has increasingly relied on snipers, improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks, while Operation Dignity forces continued to conduct air attacks on Council positions. Mortar and Grad rocket

attacks have reportedly caused the deaths of at least 20 civilians throughout the city since March.

33. Heavy fighting erupted in June between ISIL/Daesh and the Derna Mujaheddin Shura Council, a coalition of local Islamist and Jihadi groups. This was triggered by the targeted killing of two senior Council leaders, as well as by growing local opposition to the frequent beheadings, crucifixions and suicide bombings carried out by ISIL/Daesh. Supported by local citizens, the Council scored a major victory in mid-June, successfully ejecting ISIL/Daesh from the city following several days of fighting in which more than 70 ISIL/Daesh fighters were reportedly killed and more than 200 captured. Despite that, ISIL/Daesh elements remain present in a number of areas in the vicinity of Derna. The Libyan National Army, affiliated with Operation Dignity, conducted parallel operations against ISIL Daesh around Derna throughout the reporting period.

34. In a separate development, on 15 June the United States of America carried out an airstrike close to Ajdabiya, targeting a meeting of senior jihadists linked to Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb. The attack killed a number of militants, among them reportedly senior Al-Qaida figures.

Situation in the south

35. Fighting broke out in Brak al-Shati in early March between military units drawn largely from the local Magarha and Qadhadifa tribes on the one hand, and the Misratan Third Force on the other. In early April, Misratan troops captured Colonel Mohamed bin Nail, commander of the local Libyan National Army force, and subsequently turned him over to the General Prosecutor in Tripoli. On 23 April, negotiations brokered by Misratan and Zintani elders resulted in an agreement to end the fighting, placing the Brak al-Shati military base under local Libyan National Army control and redeploying the Misratan force elsewhere in the south.

36. In Awbari, sporadic fighting between Tabu and Tuareg armed groups over control of key oil facilities, roads and Government buildings continued throughout the reporting period, despite the forging of two separate ceasefire agreements in Doha and Al Baida by leaders from the two communities in early June. Relations between the two groups continued to be marred by tensions as both the Libya Dawn and Operation Dignity military coalitions sought to influence local tribal leaders to assert control over oilfields and other key facilities in the area.

37. In Sabha, incidents of criminality, including kidnappings, killings and robbery, continued throughout the reporting period. Despite several community protests against the lack of local security, efforts by the Municipal Council and Southern Operations Room to address the situation made little, if any, progress. Approximately 60 people were killed in June and July, during Ramadan. In early July, fighting between Tabu and Tuareg armed groups broke out following a spillover of tensions from Awbari. Despite a ceasefire agreement reached between representatives from the two communities on 18 July, clashes resumed a few days later.

III. Other activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

A. Electoral support

38. The High National Elections Commission remained functional throughout the reporting period, despite difficulties retaining staff and limited financial resources. UNSMIL and UNDP continued to provide assistance in maintaining the Commission's technical capacities to administer elections, convening a series of workshops between February and July to address technical topics, and facilitating contact with its counterparts in the region. As a result, the newly established Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies appointed the Commission Chairman as its interim president in May 2015. Support was also provided to the Commission for consultations with a variety of partners on a coordinated response to expected challenges associated with the implementation of a constitutional referendum. In an environment where many of the national institutions are struggling to remain operational, the Commission continues not only to be functional, but also to improve its capacity.

B. Human rights, transitional justice and rule of law

39. Violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law continued across Libya throughout the reporting period, with civilians suffering the consequences of protracted fighting and the breakdown of law and order. UNSMIL continued to monitor and report on the human rights situation in the country, despite the relocation of international staff outside of Libya in mid-July 2014 and the operational constraints imposed by the security situation in different parts of the country.

40. In Benghazi, the reported indiscriminate shelling of residential areas by all sides to the conflict, including Operation Dignity and the Benghazi Revolutionaries' Shura Council, resulted in the death and injury of civilians, including children and medical workers, while also causing damage to civilian infrastructure. The Benghazi Medical Centre was shelled on at least three occasions during the reporting period. The warring parties failed to guarantee safe passage for civilians, reportedly leaving a number of people trapped in combat zones in Benghazi. UNSMIL also received reports of the deliberate destruction of property by armed elements associated with Operation Dignity.

41. In western Libya, civilians were killed and injured in periodic outbursts of fighting in Al Zawiya and Tripoli. UNSMIL received reports of armed groups engaging in looting and deliberate destruction of civilian property targeted because of family or perceived political affiliations. Civilian facilities and infrastructure, including airports were also hit in airstrikes and shelling, particularly in Zintan and Tripoli.

42. Many human rights defenders fled the country or fell silent in the face of assault, arbitrary detention, closure of non-governmental organization offices and death threats; others operate underground at great risk to themselves and their families. The Benghazi offices of the National Council for Civil Liberties and

Human Rights, whose Tripoli offices were closed in November 2014, were raided on 16 March.

43. Journalists and other media professionals continued to face attacks, abductions, threats and intimidation against them or their families, torture and other ill treatment. On 23 April, an armed group allegedly affiliated with the Benghazi Revolutionaries' Shura Council killed Muftah al-Qatrani, a prominent media professional and owner of a television production company in Benghazi. Women journalists have also been vulnerable to sexual assaults and harassment, leading many to flee the country. Some continued to receive threats while abroad.

44. Attacks on journalists and activists took place against the backdrop of an ongoing systematic campaign of media incitement, as different television stations and other media outlets continued to either openly take sides in the conflict or be pressured into doing so. This often resulted in media outlets getting actively involved in the public dissemination of inflammatory material. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continued to work closely with Libyan media organizations to promote professional and ethical standards in news reporting and move away from programming that propagates stereotypes and risks incitement to violence.

45. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants remained vulnerable to arbitrary and prolonged detention in abusive conditions, sexual abuse, forced labour, exploitation and extortion. Foreign nationals detained by the Ministry of the Interior or by armed groups face deplorable conditions, with substandard access to basic necessities and medical care. Armed groups have abducted foreign nationals for ransom or to secure releases of Libyans detained overseas. Others have been taken on suspicion of engaging in armed hostilities. In eastern Libya, foreign nationals accused of belonging to terrorist groups have been detained without legal authorization and allegedly subjected to torture or other ill treatment.

Abductions, detention, torture and killings

46. Fighters on all sides abducted civilians on the basis of their identity, family and perceived political affiliations. Children also continued to be victims of abductions, including by armed groups seeking ransoms from their families. In eastern Libya, forces loyal to Operation Dignity abducted civilians suspected of sympathizing with or having relatives associated with the Benghazi Revolutionaries' Shura Council. Many were held in the Department of Criminal Investigations in Benghazi and Marj, the Birsis detention facility, and the military wing of Gernada Prison, amid concerns of deaths in custody.

47. At least four men were publicly executed and the hand of another amputated on the orders of a purportedly ISIL/Daesh-established court in Derna during the reporting period.

48. In western Libya, armed groups from different sides of the conflict abducted civilians, often in the hope of securing exchanges of fighters and civilians taken by rival groups. Those abducted were usually at risk of torture and other ill treatment and frequently denied contact with their families. UNSMIL also received reports of torture and other ill treatment in a number of detention facilities in western Libya, including the Abu Salim, al-Farouq, al-Jazira, and al-Janoubi detention facilities, as well as the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq and al-Wutya military bases. A number of detainees,

including one Tawerghan individual taken from the street in Tripoli, died in custody, believed to have been summarily executed or tortured to death. The Tawerghan individual's relative who had also been taken with him was transferred to al-Jawiyyah Prison in Misrata. Three aid workers employed by the Sheikh Taher al-Zawi Foundation Charity were also abducted on 5 June in al-Shwayrif while en route to deliver humanitarian assistance to areas in the south-west.

49. The appearance of a number of abducted individuals in televised "confessions" aired on the Libya Awalan channel, "admitting" to engaging in fighting and murder remains of particular concern. Bruises and swelling were visible on those filmed at the Birsis detention facility.

50. Foreign nationals were also the victims of attacks, abductions and unlawful killings because of their religion. On 19 April, ISIL Daesh released videos showing the beheadings and shootings of some 28 Ethiopian and Eritrean nationals. The fate of other Christian foreign nationals abducted between August 2014 and June 2015 remains unknown.

51. UNSMIL continued to urge the immediate and unconditional release of all those illegally detained persons. A number of prisoner exchanges between warring parties took place during the reporting period, including in April and May. Over 50 prisoners were released in Misrata in July.

Judiciary and penal system

52. Fighting in different parts of the country continued to impede the full functioning of the judicial system, particularly in Sirte, Derna and Benghazi. On 14 June, the Court of South Benghazi decided to resume operations for the first time since a bomb attack in February 2014. The Court of Derna is planning to resume work by relocating to Al Baida or Tobruk.

53. Several prisons, especially in the east and south of the country, have reported severe shortages of medical supplies, including drugs for infectious diseases. Also, as a result of budgetary considerations, authorities in Tripoli decided to reduce the medical staff seconded from the Ministry of Health to work in prisons.

Trials of officials of the former regime

54. In May, the Tripoli Court of Assize concluded public hearings in the trial of 37 former regime officials, including Saif al-Islam Qadhafi and Abdullah al-Senussi. On 28 July, the Court of Assize issued its verdict, sentencing Saif al-Islam, Abdullah al-Senussi, and 7 other officials to death, 8 others to life imprisonment and 15 to prison sentences of between 5 and 12 years; and 4 were acquitted of all charges. The Court also announced that seven of the defendants, including Saif al-Islam, were tried in absentia. The prosecution presented no witnesses or other evidence during the hearings, and the court allowed each defence to present no more than three witnesses. Some defence lawyers argued that witnesses were afraid to testify and that they faced challenges in meeting their clients privately. Mr. Qadhafi has not appeared at any hearing since June 2014, and Libya has not complied with the International Criminal Court's order to surrender him. The United Nations and human rights organizations have expressed concern that the trials fall short of international standards.

C. Security sector

Support to Libyan planning for interim security arrangements

55. Within the framework of the security track of the Libyan political dialogue, UNSMIL continued to engage Libyan security actors on planning for the implementation of interim security arrangements, outlined in the Political Agreement. Throughout the reporting period, the Mission held meetings with representatives of armed groups, police and armed forces in Libya. It is expected that plans operationalizing the security arrangements will be finalized within the security track of the Libyan political dialogue.

Border security

56. Libyan security institutions continued to have very limited capacity to control or monitor the country's land and sea borders, allowing easy access for smugglers, human traffickers and other illegal groups.

Arms and ammunition management

57. During the reporting period, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), as a component of UNSMIL, developed and disseminated a planning framework for international support for arms and ammunition management in the event that the Libyan political dialogue process concludes with agreement on the formation of a Government of National Accord. UNMAS continued to provide support to the Libyan Mine Action Centre, which is overseeing limited spot clearance of explosive remnants of war in and around Tripoli and risk education programmes. UNMAS also organized capacity-building programmes for the Centre in Tunisia, and developed a database of arms and ammunition storage facilities in Libya.

D. Coordination of international assistance

58. During the reporting period, UNSMIL continued to coordinate international assistance to Libya from Tunisia, including by chairing a number of international coordination groups in the areas of security, human rights, elections, the constitution and women's empowerment.

E. Humanitarian assistance

59. The humanitarian situation in Libya continued to deteriorate during the reporting period, affecting an estimated 2 million people, a figure representing an increase of 125 per cent since September 2014.

60. Approximately 435,000 people remain internally displaced in Libya, including approximately 290,000 women and children. As at May, 201,373 internally displaced persons were located in eastern Libya, including 105,000 in Benghazi; at least 211,902 were in western Libya, most in and around Tripoli. As at January, at least 12,230 people had been displaced by the recent fighting in and around Awbari, in addition to the 4,800 internally displaced persons who remained unable to return to their homes following clashes in January 2014. Most Libyan internally displaced

persons are sheltered in public or abandoned buildings, or hosted by relatives and local communities. Many have been displaced repeatedly and remain in need of assistance.

61. There are currently approximately 100,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Libya, of whom 36,868 have registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In June, UNHCR commenced renewal of expired asylum seeker and refugee certificates, and verification of the existing registration data, with plans to resume registration of new asylum seekers once security conditions permit.

62. Approximately 47,449 migrants and refugees reached the Italian coast by sea during the first five months of 2015, including 4,338 minors, of whom almost 3,000 were unaccompanied; approximately 90 per cent had departed from Libya, a figure representing a 15 per cent increase over the same period in 2014. More than 3,800 persons have been rescued or intercepted at sea by the Libyan Coast Guard in 2015, and disembarked in Libya.

63. Some 1.2 million migrants from neighbouring and third countries are currently estimated to be in Libya. Conditions in migrant detention centres do not meet minimum international standards; they are invariably overcrowded, with poor sanitation and often no separation of men, women, and children, creating a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR has successfully advocated for the release of persons of concern, including pregnant women in need of natal care, and continues to seek community-based alternatives to detention for children, particularly those unaccompanied. However, forced labour, exploitation and abuse in unofficial places of detention operated by militia groups and human traffickers remain serious concerns, as does the targeting of Christians by extremist groups.

64. UNHCR operates two community development centres in Tripoli and one in Benghazi through its implementing partners, providing medical assistance, psychosocial counselling, financial support for the most vulnerable, individual case management, and a safe space for asylum seekers and refugees in the urban community. In Benghazi, UNHCR also participates in coordinating the response to the crisis of internal displacement in collaboration with local and international NGOs, including through the distribution of food and non-food items to an estimated 1,200 families.

65. The intensification of fighting in eastern and southern Libya, coupled with widespread fuel shortages, the disruption of market supply and soaring prices, has made access to food a serious issue for over a million people. Despite limited funding, the World Food Programme (WFP) has distributed food rations to 146,000 internally displaced persons in Libya through local cooperating partners since January. According to a preliminary forecast by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the 2015 cereal crop is almost 10 per cent below average.

66. Shortages of some medical supplies, particularly of anaesthesia, dialysis, cancer and psychiatric medicines, as well as vaccines, have become severe owing to funding limitations and logistical difficulties. The World Health Organization and other health partners continued to provide donations of medicines in the most affected areas, but available resources are relatively limited. Damage to medical

facilities, staff shortages and local insecurity have also forced the closure of many hospitals, particularly in areas that have sustained long-term conflict, including Benghazi, Sabha, Sirte and Awbari.

67. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners consider improved and updated information on humanitarian needs in Libya a top priority. The humanitarian country team launched in April 2015 a multisectoral in-depth assessment designed to provide the evidence base for a new humanitarian needs overview and humanitarian strategic response plan for Libya. This will replace the previous humanitarian appeal for Libya launched in September 2014.

68. Limited funding for humanitarian operations for Libya continued to present significant challenges. The response to date to the current humanitarian appeal has fallen considerably short of the $35,250,000 requested, with only 34 per cent funded.

69. Against the backdrop of continued attacks on religious and cultural sites and the threat that the ongoing consolidation of ISIL Daesh is posing to Libya's cultural heritage, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conducted a series of workshops in Tunisia for technical staff involved in heritage protection in Libya. UNESCO is also expanding its work with municipalities and youth in Libya to promote the appreciation, protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

70. Due to security conditions, the majority of international staff have been relocated to Tunisia, with the Mission's temporary headquarters in Tunis. As at May, a total of 224 UNSMIL international and national staff members and government-provided personnel were deployed. In relation to the UNSMIL presence in Tunisia, the United Nations is in discussions with the Government of Tunisia to conclude an agreement on the emergency temporary relocation of UNSMIL to the country, in order to ensure that the Mission can continue to carry out its mandate from there. In addition, UNSMIL has three staff members at Headquarters and 15 at the Global Service Centre in Brindisi.

V. Safety and security

71. The overall security situation in Libya remained highly volatile and unpredictable. Terrorist attacks and security incidents targeting the international community continued during the reporting period. On 12 April, terrorists attacked the South Korean embassy in Tripoli, with a similar attack on the Moroccan embassy the following day. On 20 April, an improvised explosive device exploded in front of the Spanish embassy. On 24 May, unknown gunmen attacked Ukraine's ambassador to Libya while he was driving from Tripoli to Tunis. On 12 June, an armed group stormed the Tunisian consulate in Tripoli and kidnapped 10 Tunisian staff, in apparent reprisal for the Tunisian Government's arrest of a senior Libya Dawn member facing kidnapping charges in Tunisia. The Tunisian nationals were later freed.

72. Several protests against the United Nations-facilitated Libyan political dialogue and my Special Representative took place during the reporting period. They included demonstrations in Tobruk on 9 and 23 March, with the latter preventing a scheduled meeting between my Special Representative and House of Representative members. In Tripoli, protestors gathered on 31 March and 7 April at the compound previously used as the UNSMIL headquarters. That was followed on 1 May by a call by elements of the Libya Dawn coalition to protest against the United Nations for allegedly undermining the Libyan revolution.

VI. Financial aspects

73. The total resources approved for UNSMIL for the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015 amount to $47,860,100, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/274 B.

VII. Observations and recommendations

74. A year after the serious outbreak of violent conflict in the summer of 2014, Libya's political, social and security landscape has been completely transformed. Political polarization continues to be manifested in the deeply divisive institutional crisis at both the legislative and executive levels, dangerously hindering governance and undermining any effort to address the many challenges confronting Libya. The grave humanitarian situation resulting from internal displacement, growing insecurity and criminality has been compounded by further weakening of State institutions. The consequences of the conflict in Libya are evident not only in the hardship borne by the Libyan people, but also in the increasing activities of human smugglers and traffickers, who continue to brazenly exploit the country's security vacuum.

75. The scale of human suffering, the degree of economic decline and the destruction wrought on Libya and the foundations of the State underscore the urgent need for bold and decisive steps to restore peace, law and order. While no one underestimates the deep sense of mistrust that continues to characterize the political climate, leaders from across the Libyan political spectrum must be reminded that unless they quickly reach an agreement that allows for a peaceful solution to the current conflict, the consequences to Libya's long-term future and stability will be dire.

76. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the perseverance and contribution of all participants in the Libyan political dialogue and commend them for their courage in transcending their differences in the interest of peace, with a view to forging a vision that allows for the resumption of Libya's democratic transition and an end to the armed conflict.

77. The initialling of the Libyan Political Agreement on 11 July marks an important breakthrough in the Libyan political dialogue. Despite the difficulties and challenges that have confronted the talks, these Libyan leaders have demonstrated a clear commitment to bringing an end to the year-long conflict. The initialling of the Agreement has sent a reassuring message to the Libyan people that Libya's political leaders can work together to unite and rebuild their country, and spare further bloodshed.

78. The success of any agreement and its ability to bring an effective end to the conflict will be largely dependent on its inclusiveness. I urge all parties that have not initialled the agreement to continue engaging with the dialogue process. There can be no alternative to dialogue, and the United Nations will spare no effort to ensure that the concerns of all stakeholders are taken into account.

79. I further call on Libya's leaders to take note of local reconciliation initiatives in the west, which not so long ago was the scene of major hostilities. I am particularly encouraged by the initiatives taken by community representatives and security actors to negotiate local ceasefire agreements and prisoner exchanges, and I call on other actors elsewhere in the country to show similar leadership. Today, Libya's leaders have a unique opportunity to conclude a political agreement that can bring a decisive end to the conflict and a resumption of the political transition process.

80. For its part, the United Nations, along with the wider international community, will continue to work in close consultation with Libyan stakeholders to ensure adequate support to the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement, as well as technical assistance to a future Government of National Accord to enable it to effectively address the wide array of complex challenges facing the country.

81. Notwithstanding progress in political talks at the national level, I remain deeply concerned by the situation in Benghazi, a city that once prided itself on being the birthplace of the Libyan revolution. The armed conflict has destroyed large areas of the city and is significantly impacting the humanitarian situation of the civilian population. An agreement that ends the fighting in Benghazi will not only help address and alleviate the existing humanitarian needs, it will also pave the way for legitimate security actors and State institutions to jointly counter the threat posed by terrorist and other violent extremist groups operating in the city and its environs. Libya's leaders must take decisive action to spare Benghazi further carnage and hardship.

82. I am equally alarmed by the apparent increased criminality and communal fighting in various areas of southern Libya, which has forced hundreds of families to flee their homes and placed an additional burden on communities already struggling to cope with the continued influx of migrants and refugees. The cycles of violence and communal tensions underscore the need for Libya's political leaders and stakeholders to move quickly to conclude a political settlement that restores State authority and paves the way for the establishment of law and order.

83. The continued ability of terrorist and other violent extremist groups such as ISIL, Daesh and Ansar al-Sharia to expand their areas of influence and control is a source of grave concern. Experience from elsewhere in the region has demonstrated clearly the imminent danger these groups pose not only to the territorial integrity of a State, but equally and perhaps more destructively to local communities. Countering this threat will require a unified and collective effort on the part of all Libyans. I urge Libya's leaders to take the threat seriously. There is no doubt that these groups are acting in close coordination with other violent extremist and terrorist groups in the region, and that they will stop at nothing in the pursuit of their objective to forcibly impose a political and societal vision that is at odds with the principles and values that guided Libya's 17 of February Revolution.

84. I am deeply concerned by the practice of abducting civilians and other serious violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law. I urge the Libyan authorities and those with influence on the ground to do their utmost to end these abuses and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice, in accordance with international standards. Field commanders and political leaders in particular should declare publicly that such abuses will not be tolerated and that those committing them will be removed from active duty and held accountable. All those detained must be treated humanely and either released or handed over to the justice system for fair and due process. All abducted civilians must be released immediately and unconditionally and the fate of missing persons must be clarified.

85. I urge all parties to the conflict to immediately end indiscriminate attacks or direct attacks on civilians and ensure the safe and voluntary evacuation of civilians trapped in areas of conflict. I also call on all warring parties to ensure unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance to all affected communities, and undertake all necessary measures to ensure that humanitarian personnel are protected from attacks including arbitrary detention and intimidation. With regard to international support for humanitarian efforts, I reiterate earlier calls for Member States to redouble their efforts towards mobilizing additional resources in support of the Libya Humanitarian Appeal.

86. The United Nations will remain focused on supporting the Libyans to conclude the political agreement that was initialled on 11 July. The United Nations will provide facilitation and assistance in accordance with the principles of national ownership. To that end, I recommend that the Security Council renew the mandate of UNSMIL as an integrated special political mission, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2213 (2015). This will allow the United Nations and my Special Representative to work with the Libyans on moving the political dialogue process forward, conclude the Political Agreement and pave the way for the formation of a Government of National Accord. In accordance with my special report on the strategic assessment of the United Nations presence in Libya of 13 February (S/2015/113), the United Nations has continued its planning process to implement the recommendations of the report in the evolving context. The Government of National Accord, once formed, will determine the support required from the United Nations in the immediate term in order to enable the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. The United Nations has initiated preparations to respond swiftly and effectively to such a request. Furthermore, I intend to dispatch a technical assessment mission to Libya to formulate proposals on how the United Nations should specifically adapt to the new operating environment that will result in the establishment of a Government of National Accord.

87. I would like to express my appreciation for the strong support and technical and logistical assistance that various Member States, as well as regional and international organizations, have provided in support of the United Nations-facilitated dialogue process. I also wish to convey my appreciation to the staff of UNSMIL for their dedication and continued efforts in such difficult circumstances, more than a year after the Mission's evacuation from Tripoli. Finally, I would like to commend my Special Representative, Bernardino León, for his leadership and tireless efforts to bring Libyan actors to the negotiating table. While much work lies ahead, I congratulate him and his team on the progress achieved so far, against formidable odds.